Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*
Editorial Office 1323 M STREET, WASHINGTON 5, D. C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066
VOL. V, NO. 13, *Issue Number* 218, MARCH 31, 1948 ★ *Editors:* FELIX MORLEY & FRANK C. HANIGHEN

THE TECHNIQUES OF COMMUNISM

by Bertrand de Jouvenel

The technique of seizing countries and subjecting their people has made enormous strides in ten years. As an artist in the destruction of nations, Stalin is way ahead of Hitler.

A complaint was lodged at UN against the operation in Prague. But what is there to complain about? Our French Communist press made it quite clear that nothing has happened beyond a mere internal crisis, happily solved in a democratic manner. Where indeed is the upheaval?

Before the crisis, the Communist Prime Minister Gottwald presided over an all-party cabinet. After the crisis, Gottwald again presides over a cabinet where again all parties are represented. Why worry about the detail that three at least of these parties are "represented" by Communist agents who seized the party and newspaper offices by force, with the help of the Communist police. These slight shadows hardly mar the general picture of a regular democratic government formed according to normal constitutional procedure.

Undoubtedly it amuses the Communists to mock Western creeds by using their trappings for a travesty. But we are not duped, and if we had been, Jan Masaryk's sacrifice would have disabused us.

Of course, the democratic disguise after the event is only assumed for a purpose of mockery. By contrast, it is used very competently indeed to achieve power. The procedure deserves attention.

II

Recalling Hitler's conquest of Czechoslovakia or his earlier conquest of Austria, one remembers the tramping troops, the churning tanks, and the big parades which underlined the achievement. Hitler relied on visible military means.

That was necessary in the case of Czechoslovakia because Hitler had no fifth column there. It is a legend, nourished by the Communists, that Hitler possessed fifth columns in every country. In fact Hitlerism was primarily Pan-Germanism and appealed only to German nationalism. Stalinism, on the other hand, is primarily a world enterprise. Soviet imperialism is unlimited in the range of countries it can subvert.

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Nazi imperialism had only a very limited range of countries where it could find substantial internal support.

Austria was the foremost of these Germanic countries. There Nazism found almost the same measure of internal support that Sovietism found in Czechoslovakia. With the strong Austrian Nazi party, it should have been possible for Hitler to take over without the visible intervention of German military force. Nevertheless, the Austrian Nazis accomplished nothing, discredited themselves by their bungling, bloody attempt of July 25, 1934; and though they were very strong in 1938, they did not prepare the way -- as did the Czech Communists -- for the conquest of their country.

It was the threat of German force, first covert and then open, which brought Prime Minister Schussnigg to Berchtesgaden, which led him to take the Nazi Seiss-Inquart into his cabinet, which closed the Premier's mouth after he had promised to appeal to the people. And even with the Nazis in the cabinet, Hitler could not trust them to achieve political conquest by outwardly peaceful means. The Fuehrer had to march in with his army.

There should be more emphasis on the fact that there has been no sign of the Russian army in the second conquest of Czechoslovakia. The whole job has been accomplished from the inside. There is nothing to show any intervention except Zorine's arrival from Moscow in mid-February, an easily overlooked crudity which can surely be avoided in the next operation. On the whole, therefore, the Stalin technique has been as smooth as that of Hitler was clumsy. A wit defines the Kremlin slogan: "The subjection of the people must be the work of the people themselves."

III

How is it done? Every school of strategy has its favorite maneuver, used in every instance with the slight variations demanded by circumstances. Let us analyze the Communist strategy for the seizure of individual nations. It has several subtle operations.

The first of these may be termed Operation National Anthem. It consists in identifying the Communist Party with patriotism, not, as formerly, with internationalism and antimilitarism. All the national idols which were formerly an object of mockery are now ostentatiously revered. In the United States, Jefferson and Lincoln are now patronized by the Communists. In France, the Joan of Arc anniversary used to be an occasion for Catholic celebrations. Now the Communists demand to be the first in honoring this "admirable daughter of the people". The

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party is bringing out a series of popular booklets, celebrating the great Frenchmen. Our kings are not forgotten in this series.

Operation National Anthem makes possible Operation Unanimity, which we in France call Operation Lamourette from the name of a famous kiss exchanged by political enemies. Operation Unanimity leads to the formation of a "popular front" against "reaction", realized in France after the liberation but happily dissolved by M. Ramadier. In Czechoslovakia the "popular front" paved the way for the February putsch.

Operation National Anthem and Operation Unanimity are immensely profitable to the Communists. First, the appeal to the masses is enormously enhanced. A discovery the Marxists made rather late in the day is that the common man is a patriot, very sensitive to national glory. For years the progress of Communism was blocked merely by its open contempt for national feeling. It was most important to wash off this blot and very useful to have General de Gaulle, or a writer like Francois Mauriac, testify that no better patriots could be found than the Communists. Operation Unanimity further gives a tone of respectability to Communists. Another discovery for Marxists is that the common man likes respectability.

In addition, Operation Unanimity places Communists -- while still a minority -- in control of governmental machinery. The use to which Nosek put his possession of the Ministry of the Interior appeared plainly during the crisis at Prague. He made the police a party weapon.

For the conquest of key positions, however, another operation is essential. This, in our crude French manner, we call Operation Cuckold. It is directed against the Social Democrats, or those whom, in America, you strangely call "Liberals".

In all European countries the Social Democrats have built up any number of powerful workers' organizations, unions, youth movements, women's movements and so forth. Now, in a movement of brotherly love, the Communists propose to share their all with the Socialists. In fact they leave the chairmanships to the Socialists and take the less impressive secretarial jobs. Stalin has shown what can be done from a secretary's office. The work of organization centers there, and within a little time the unions are "colonized" by Communists.

Thus it was with the French CGT. Thus it was with the Czech labor federation. Like Frachon in Paris, Zapotocky in Prague was a party-liner. And a "conference" of eight thousand union delegates was scheduled in Prague for Sunday, February 22. These hand-picked men were on the spot at the decisive hour.

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IV

I have left for the last an operation which is of capital importance in the whole procedure of conquest. It is Operation Smear, which we call Operation Basile from the famous praise of calumny which all opera-goers know. Operation Smear is designed to cripple resistance to the Communist seizure of power, and to do this well in advance.

During the period of Operation Unanimity, the Communists show a most generous disposition to get on well with all and sundry. But gradually it begins to be noised about that So-and-So is a Fascist sympathizer, or anti-Semitic, or pro-German, or "Isolationist" -- or something. The rumor never openly originates with the Communists, but their accomplices, carefully dispersed in shadow newspapers and shadow societies, take it up. And, in the absence of any serious restraint upon libel, the smear proceeds gaily on its way. It is aimed at anyone who, while he may not even be an enemy of the Communists, is regarded by them as a possible element of strong resistance. So he must be purged, not by the Communists but by his own friends and associates, who may be themselves a little susceptible to this refinement of blackmail.

The whole point of Operation Smear is that if you can taint a few courageous people, then the taint can be easily extended to their less courageous friends, and to the friends of their friends. Thus Operation Smear eats up the bones of the resistance to Communism.

Then the time comes for Operation Reichstag, thus termed in honor of Goering. Operation Reichstag consists in the discovery of a plot. But it must be a really bad plot, with capitalists and financiers and foreign Powers involved. If the Nazis can be dragged in even at this late date, let us not despise their horror value. The accusations brought in Prague add up to a most fantastic story. But then the Communists are endowed with a surrealist sense of humor. The more unlikely the conspiracy, the more people are shown doing things out of character, the more they like it. It illustrates the character of the bourgeois society which, as students of Marx know, is a mystification. So if the priest can be depicted as hiding dollars in the sacred vessels, the old-fashioned radical serving as agent for the Nazis, all the better.

Such are, in brief, the methods by which Communism seizes power. I have described the technique in France. But it is similar everywhere.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. V, NO. 13

By Frank C. Hanighen March 31, 1948

The Executive's demands for more military appropriations have resulted in considerable confusion -- and suspicion -- on Capitol Hill. Some Members of Congress are moved to inquire as to what has been done with the $11 billion spent last year for defense, in view of Secretary Marshall's statement that our defense establishment is a "hollow shell". In the present confusion, indeed, Congress is by no means wasting time in consideration of these matters (as is often charged); but on the contrary it is earnestly and not unintelligently trying to examine the requests for defense and the reasons therefor. The following colloquy between Senator Russell (Ga.), who, incidentally, supports UMT, and Secretary Forrestal (Hearings of the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 18) is revealing:

"SENATOR RUSSELL. As one who is very sympathetic to universal military training, I must say that it seems that we have considerable confusion about this whole proposition. The Secretary [Forrestal] states we have got to have a military force . . . that would enable us to attain the objectives of our foreign policy. I do not think that policy has been made clear as to just where and at what juncture we propose to use those military forces. Then we are told that we cannot know today the number of the military forces that will be necessary to carry out the foreign policy; that has not been, as yet, clearly defined.

"SECRETARY FORRESTAL. I could give you some estimates, but for the very reason you mentioned, I think I am reluctant to use figures until I am very sure that they have solid foundation. The Army, I think, will come up with a request for the augmentation of these authorized strengths to around 700,000 men, but when you are saying what is necessary to carry out our policy, that must always be a different point." Obviously, Congress must chase from pillar to post.

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Members of Congress have naturally been very curious as to the reasons why the Administration reversed its Palestine partition policy. Senator Ball (Minn.), in his sub-committee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, sought to obtain an answer (Hearings of March 23). The reply falls considerably short of clarity, but offers some interesting sidelights:

"SENATOR BALL. . . . I know I for one have been very much concerned at the United States position on Palestine, where we seem to march up the Hill and march down again. I am wondering if there is any lack of funds or personnel or information which led to that unfortunate situation.

"SECRETARY MARSHALL. In regard to Palestine, I do not believe I could state that there was any lack of funds in relation to that particular situation, except to the extent that practically everybody we have now is terribly overworked. We are having one breakdown after another in health because individual officers are pressed so hard. . . . There is a shortage of personnel in the State Department. . . . [The State Department personnel (including Foreign Service) numbers approximately 20,000 today.]

"SENATOR BALL. I take it from what you said that, outside of the general pressure of other work, there was no lack of work in the State Department in following through and anticipating the consequences of the first move in Palestine.

"SECRETARY MARSHALL. I do not think there was anything of that sort, sir. I know that the people involved in it, Mr. Henderson and all his department, were very hard pressed because we had the Greek matter and other matters coming up."

The fact is that Mr. Loy Henderson and the Near Eastern Division which he heads continued to warn the Secretary of State of the dangers of Palestine par-

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tition. Their opposition was so well known that Mr. Henderson was pictured as the "villain of the piece" in the campaign literature and speeches used in the famous Bronx by-election in February.

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The fact is, also, that the Jews received early warning of the perils of Zionism from the American Council of Judaism (newsletter, January, 1947): "The official Zionist miscalculation on the Arab question is now a boomerang against the Jews in Palestine and conceivably the Jews the world over. We learn from the Zionist Congress itself that the 'Arab boycott is threatening our economic state but our leaders belittle the effect'. We know that there is an Arab army in formation. The whole pent-up force is coming to an explosion point. The falsity of the Zionist claim that Arabs and Jews live peacefully together is becoming more and more manifest. A hard core has emerged of 'an irrepressible conflict'. Long ago we pointed out that machine guns were not the answer. Bombs and explosives and guns are not the monopoly of Jewish terrorists alone. Their opponents can secure them as well. This prophecy, also, has become a reality. The clouds of violent Arab-Zionist conflict are massing."

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A New York Times dispatch from Helsinki (March 27) speaks of the "specter of civil war" in Finland. This ominous view receives confirmation by private advices from reliable sources in Helsinki. It is feared, say these sources, that the proposed Russo-Finnish pact will include Russian rights to air bases in southern Finland. The air aspect of the pact assumes great importance, as Moscow is said to be concerned about the strength of the Swedish air force. That force is second only to Britain's in Europe.

According to these sources in Helsinki, the Finns with traditional stubbornness are preparing to resist Russian efforts to bring their country into line by the technique used in Czechoslovakia and the Balkans. Finland, it is emphasized, is not Czechoslovakia. The Finns will not take Russian seizure with the submission of the Czechs. Even the weight of Russian influence in the past three years has failed to give the local Finnish Communist Party much strength. The Finnish Communists, who numbered but five per cent of the electorate before the war, have risen to only 12 per cent today. Finns, say these sources, will resist conscription into the Red Army. They will go into the forests and fight as partisans.

The underground is being organized rapidly, and is receiving arms. There are no illusions about the pace of events. The Russo-Finnish defense pact is bound to be unpopular and rejection by Parliament would precipitate matters. In that event, a Communist-engineered coup would be inevitable, and would take place before the election, scheduled for July 1. Then, "to the forests . . ."

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Among those Washington officials who are in a position to know the state of Italy, the guess is that the Communist bloc will win between 25 to 30 per cent of the seats in the general election, scheduled for April 18. A month ago, the betting was that the bloc would take between 40 and 50 per cent. A business friend, who returned from Europe less than a week ago, tells us that he sounded out Italian business associates and discovered that their estimate was about 30 per cent of the seats for the Left bloc.

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Notes on the Publishing Field ---- Henry Luce, publisher of Time, Life, and Fortune, has postponed work -- for at least a year -- on his projected "intellectual monthly". The venture was launched over two years ago by a former Central

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European journalist, Willi Schlamm. A year ago, John Chamberlain and Russell Davenport joined the board of editors. Dummies were made, manuscripts were purchased, and until recently hope was expressed for early publication of the first number. The present unfavorable situation of magazine publication reportedly prompted Mr. Luce to reconsider.

---- Marshall Field is encountering difficulties in disposing of his New York daily PM. A San Diego publisher failed to reach an agreement with the Newspaper Guild, and abandoned his proposed deal with Field. It is reliably reported that Field has forsaken his former Left Wing position; and that he declined one offer from what is described as a "consortium of fellow travellers" who had the necessary purchase money and could have obtained a Guild contract. Field was prepared to shut down the paper permanently rather than assist in any way the Wallace Left Wing movement. And for their part, the Left Wingers in the Guild preferred to throw the staff members out of their jobs rather than to permit publication of a "reactionary" or "Social Fascist" paper.

---- The Reader's Digest reportedly will push forward its plans for publishing German and Italian editions. Preparations for these new foreign issues of the periodical have been going on for some time. The fact that the Digest has decided on this European expansion at such a troubled time impresses observers who have been speculating on the turn of events in Europe. Evidently Mr. DeWitt Wallace, a shrewd publisher, is convinced that war is not imminent.

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Dr. Benjamin Stolberg, who has been studying political science in Hollywood, remarks: "Walt Disney is the most sinister character in the country. He drew a cartoon of Harry Truman. And then he maliciously animated it."

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From the vantage point of socialistic England, J. Middleton Murry in the Adelphi (January-March, 1948) peers across the Atlantic at the strange picture of capitalistic United States trying to act in a largely collectivized world: "In the international sphere it is manifest that U. S. A. is now called upon to act as no national society has ever acted before: with disinterested benevolence, on an unprecedented scale. The conflict between this demand and the 'sacred egoism' which is still the ethos of American society is fascinating, especially as it takes the form of an endeavor to persuade the average American that a colossal act of charity towards Europe is in his own interests. These interests of his, it is argued, require that he should make a great sacrifice to prevent the spread of Communism. That is true enough. But why is it in the interest of the average American to prevent the spread of Communism?

"There are two different and discrepant answers, according as Communism is regarded, primarily as contrary to individualistic capitalism, or to political freedom. Naturally, since the Americans are not yet under the necessity (as the British are) of dissociating the ideas of individualistic capitalism and political freedom, the two answers are confused with one another. But it is obvious that to prevent the spread of an anti-capitalist system by an act of colossal charity, which is more contrary to capitalism than Communism itself, is a queer enterprise. To defend capitalism by negating it is the politics of Alice in Wonderland. The Americans are vaguely conscious of the contradiction, and it causes them much mental distress. What it comes to in fact is that the Americans find capitalism effective enough still as a domestic system, yet are forced to realize that it does not work as an international system: in other words capitalism has become a local habit, a custom of the country, but no longer of the world. As far as the world is concerned, not sacred egotism, but charity is required."

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Book Events

The Price of Power, by Hanson W. Baldwin. New York: Harper and Brothers, $3.75.
Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

We have here an elaborate analysis of the military situation of the United States in the light of its apparent historical destiny and in relation to its only apparent adversary, which is, of course, Soviet Russia. The work is in some sense a collaboration, for it embodies the results of a two-year study by Mr. Baldwin and a score of assorted experts under the aegis of the indefatigable Council on Foreign Relations.

The significant alteration in the strategic position of the United States, Mr. Baldwin finds, is in the acquisition of what he calls live frontiers. That is to say, we are for the first time vulnerable to large-scale assaults by an extra-continental enemy. These might take the form of attack by directed missiles of incalculable speed and unimaginable destructive power, or deadly bombardments of our coastal cities by fleets of fast and powerfully armed submarines, or the poisoning of populations and the destruction of crops by lethal gases, radioactive dusts or disease germs. Against such attacks there is no real defense, except the threat of retaliation in kind; therefore, the traditional defensive strategy of the United States must be abandoned for a strategy of offense. But the great problem is whether an offensive strategy is possible without a complete sacrifice of our political institutions and liberties. It requires no great imagination to perceive how war with Russia might lead at once to a reorganization of our society on a totalitarian pattern that would be almost indistinguishable from the Russian pattern. It is also possible that the mere anticipation of war with Russia might lead to the same consequences. Mr. Baldwin recognizes the dilemma and is, indeed, at great pains to emphasize it. Nevertheless, he believes that offensive preparations, giving predominant place to air power, guided missiles, submarines and airborne armies and making increasing use of overseas bases, are possible without placing our destinies in the hands of the military, and without permitting the total wealth of the nation to be devoured by armaments. As for Universal Military Training, according to the plans now proposed, Mr. Baldwin appears to consider it a positive danger, in as far as it might divert funds and energies that should go into the creation of highly trained professional forces.

Nor does Mr. Baldwin consider that war with Russia is either inevitable or desirable. In such a war, he believes, whether it comes soon or late, the United States would be ultimately victorious; but the victory would be at disastrous cost, and like all such victories would settle nothing. All the same, he has no faith in the possibility of peace by agreement; that is precluded by the very nature of Communism and by the fact that the vital interests of Soviet Russia are in world-wide collision with those of the United States. The hope, therefore, is an equipoise of power that may preserve the condition of armed and uneasy truce. The advance of Communism, both in Europe and in Asia, must of course be checked; both by materialist assistance to non-Communist countries and by a chain of alliances with them. For its part, the Kremlin is unlikely to begin a war to gain ends which the Communist hierarchy believes can be reached by less hazardous routes. Communism is still a powerful religion against which the Western world has not yet found any new spiritual weapon, and the Marxist zealots are still persuaded that time is their most powerful ally. But this, Mr. Baldwin thinks, may be an illusion. The essential weakness of fanaticism is that it cannot be indefinitely sustained, and a quarter century hence the potential enemy may not be Communism and Russia at all but some other force now unrecognized. Meanwhile, the moral is readiness without hysteria.

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